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Letter dated 9 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to present my compliments to you and to inform you of the decision of the Government of the Republic of El Salvador to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2015-2017, at the elections to be held on 21 October 2014 during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Government of the Republic of El Salvador attaches the utmost importance to the promotion and protection of human rights and is deeply committed to the full and effective implementation of international human rights law.

In that regard, pursuant to resolution 60/251 of the General Assembly and in accordance with the request of the Government of the Republic of El Salvador, I submit herewith an aide-memoire containing the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Republic of El Salvador (see annex).

It would be appreciated if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Rubén Ignacio **Zamora Rivas**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/69/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 9 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of El Salvador to the Human Rights Council, 2015-2017

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Human rights constitute a major part of the state policy of El Salvador and are a fundamental pillar of its foreign policy. In that regard, the protection of the human rights of Salvadoran citizens, within the country and abroad, and the moral and material restoration and redress for the victims of the armed conflict (1980-1992), as well as the fulfilment of the acquired obligations of the State concerning human rights, are priorities for the Salvadoran State.

2. The above is consistent with article 1 of the Constitution, which establishes that "El Salvador recognizes the human person as the origin and the end of the activity of the State, which is organized to attain justice, judicial security, and the common good", and with the provisions in title II of the Constitution on the rights and fundamental guarantees of the person.

3. El Salvador presented its candidature on 6 April 2011, marking the first time it aspires to be chosen to become one of the 47 members of the Human Rights Council since the Council was established in March of 2006 by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/251.

4. Participation in the Human Rights Council represents for El Salvador an opportunity to continue making great strides towards meeting its international commitments in the field of human rights, demonstrating the importance it attaches to living under the rule of law in harmony with its neighbours and achieving peace in the world.

5. El Salvador is a country with a comprehensive vision for its obligations in the field of human rights, which is reflected in the actions of the State and has been achieved as part of its long peacebuilding process, since the signing of the Peace Accords on 16 January 1992.

6. Pursuant to the outcomes of these agreements, El Salvador carried out constitutional reforms with respect to the judiciary and the electoral system, created the national human rights ombudsman and established the national civil police as a professional and independent institution separate from the armed forces, which was also in turn restructured.

7. Since the signing of the Peace Accords, El Salvador has journeyed down a path that, since 2010, has finally allowed it to come to terms with its own history, acknowledging the responsibility of the State for the past serious violations of human rights in the context of the armed conflict. Furthermore, in compliance with the historical debt to the victims of those violations, the State has pursued a programme of reparations for victims of grave human rights violations occurring in the context of internal armed conflict, through which the State seeks to provide remedy for the victims and strengthen its democratic consolidation.

8. All of the above-mentioned developments are historic milestones that place El Salvador in the context of democratic societies with respect to the rule of law, international law, human rights and its international commitments.

9. Recognizing this, El Salvador promoted the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 14/7, which was adopted by consensus, and in which the Council proclaimed 24 March as the International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims. In its resolution 65/196, also adopted by consensus, the General Assembly reiterated the proclamation.

10. In February 2010, El Salvador underwent its first universal periodic review, a mechanism established by the Human Rights Council to monitor compliance by States with their obligations and commitments to human rights. Aware of the importance of gradual progress in the field of human rights, the State welcomed the recommendations made in the context of the review and initiated a multi-stakeholder process of internal consultations, involving civil society and public institutions, regarding international instruments in the field of human rights to which the State had not yet become a party.

11. El Salvador recognizes the importance of democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and thus promotes the development of public policies from a human rights perspective, the implementation of actions for the recovery of its historical memory, and the fulfilment of the obligations arising from the ratification of international treaties. El Salvador has also placed special emphasis on the needs of children and adolescents, women, the rights of older persons, the social protection of the environment, the right to health and rights of migrants, among others.

12. As a member of the Human Rights Council, El Salvador will be committed to the strengthening of the international system of human rights and, in particular, to the consolidation of the Council; will work tirelessly to build a culture of respect, protection and promotion of human rights, with a balanced approach to all subjects, and the proper use of the different existing mechanisms at the disposal of the Council; and will promote a comprehensive approach that provides spaces for dialogue and cooperation, in order to strengthen the Council's reaction capacity to critical scenarios and provide an objective approach to urgent situations.

13. El Salvador will also be committed to the promotion of the consolidation of the universal periodic review and to maintaining an open and committed relationship with international treaty bodies and mechanisms. It will keep an open and standing invitation for all special procedures within the framework of action of the Human Rights Council.

14. Domestically, El Salvador will continue to promote legislation and administrative and other measures in order to advance the goal of ensuring that public policy guarantees the full exercise of human rights. Moreover, El Salvador hopes to work to translate the vision of human rights into public agendas and to ensure that human rights become State policy and not simply the agenda of a particular government during its tenure.

15. Aware of the importance of different actors, El Salvador continues to promote an open and sustained dialogue in different international forums and organizations, such as the Human Rights Council.